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THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CATALOGUE OF SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE, LONDON, 1910¹

BEFORE giving an account of the second International Convention of the International Catalogue of Scientific Literature it will be necessary to briefly review the history of the enterprise and outline its organization. Secretary Henry, of the Smithsonian Institution in 1855, suggested and attempted to establish a Catalogue of Scientific Literature through international cooperation; his efforts, however, were not successful and it was not until the beginning of the publication of the Catalogue of Scientific Papers by the Royal Society in 1882 that his idea was even partly carried into effect. This catalogue continued until 1894 when the Royal Society realized that the task was impossible for any one society or indeed for any one nation to undertake. The Royal Society then through the British Foreign Office called the attention of the governments of the world to the great need of a catalogue of current scientific publications, with the result that an international conference was held in London in 1896 to which twenty-three governments sent delegates, the United States being represented by Dr. John S. Billings and Professor Simon Newcomb. This conference decided that it was both necessary and desirable to begin the publication of a catalogue of scientific literature. Various committees were appointed to consider the numerous questions involved, and a general plan of organization was outlined. A second con-

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¹ Read at the general meeting of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, April 20, 1911.